



FROM THE OTHER END





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included her works in the post graduate research curriculum. As Banira Giri is becoming enormously popular, her works are being translated into several languages of the world. Currently, she works as Associate Professor of Nepali at Tribhuvan University.

YUYUTSU R. D.'s new book of poems *Bhimphedi* will appear from the Nirala publications soon.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## BOOKS BY BANIRA GIRI

### POETRY :

**Eauta Eauta**

**Jjudo Jang Bahadur** : (Each one a living Jung Bahadur)

**Jeevan Thayamartu** (Life : no place)

**Mero Avishkar** (My discovery)

**Banira Giri ka**

**Naya Kavita Horu** : (New Poems) (Forthcoming)

### FICTION

**Karagar** (The Prisonhouse)

**Nirbandh** (Unbound)

**Mero Yatra Horu** (Travelogues) (Forthcoming)

**for**  
**Banira's Shankar**

## NIRALA SERIES

*A Series of Contemporary Literature*

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*David Ray : Elysium In The Halls Of Hell*

*Ramanand Rathi : Dying in Rajasthan*

*Yuyutsu R. D. : A Prayer In Daylight*

*Jayanta Mahapatra : Dispossessed Nests*

*Banira Giri : From The Other End*

*Bimal Nibha : Men Before Fire*

## INTRODUCTION

To be in love with you is to taste the juice of your labouring valley.

Stifling cries, pulling green creepers entwined round the hefty thighs of saal trees, rubbing palms against the rugged edges of your rocks, listening to the disheartening chorus of the wailing jackals scavenging in the eye of the blue jungle, the odour of your love still lingering in the corners of my fingernails...

In the middle of the frozen nights when green serpents crawl into the warm grasses of your valley, lying on the mossy rocks shaped by the brooks, counting the jingling beats of your footsteps, I start counting the dying heart-beats of hungry porters.

On the leech-ridden paths of your dripping hillsides, away from the tiny wooden windows of your shop where you sit, poisoning the threadbare dancing workers from the sullen tunnels of Hydro-electric Project, I trudge along the flooded brook, talking to drunken drivers, listening to their tales...

Of your past lovers, of young girls who eloped with drivers to the cities, of native sons who got killed, fighting in the alien lands, of landlord's long age and his long books of scarlet accounts, of porters who hanged themselves just for a handful of boiled maize.

While reading Banira's poetry, one experiences such pangs of a suffering valley. Banira always unleashes the buried

life-motion of a community, labouring for bare survival in an idyllic landscape Instead of peering into the mysterious eye of the blue valley, she conjures a vision of "sturdy legs, straining beyond strength/to carry/bear-big sackloads/beyond frozen hillranges"

To capture the agony of the Napalese masses, Banira employs the declarative outspokenness of public addresses :

From the fancy windows  
of huge castles mighty giants leer  
at your clownish moves  
of survival in the flooded paddy fields.  
When would you fling  
a ball of cotton up to the weeping winds ?  
When would you furl a flaming torch  
in your field's wailing sky ?  
When would you  
flash *khukri*  
in the dark night  
of your labouring life to tear off  
the leprosy mask  
of these giants peering through  
the blind  
shutters of skyscrapers ?

But what saves the declarative outrageousness of public addresses from being blatant protests or mere slogans is the compassionate context of a woman's world. A Banira poem fuses the subtle inquiries of a meditation with the awed rhetoric of a prophesy

Like a dazzling prince  
riding a white horse, flashing  
a flame of decision,  
wouldn't you come then ?  
Dreamy virgins  
holding pitchers of faith would welcome you.  
Pregnant mothers  
would donate their embryos to you.  
Dusty hutdwellers  
would open their tiny wooden windows

facing  
the green stretch of the paddy.  
Even tiny tassels  
would nod, beginning a dance.

Thus, the sheer vigour of her potent voice and authenticity of her vision enthralls the reader. That's what makes her poems ferocious as wild beasts, uncontrollable, candid.

Banira continuously shatters inert postures of natural objects and catapults them into sizzling images to celebrate the inherent human potential in creation :

Let us play  
holl in the blood-spilling rise of the angry sun.  
Let us guard  
the rise of the full moon.  
Let us shatter  
the castle of the stars.  
Let us make  
wine in the turbulent pitcher of the ocean.  
Let us roast  
bread in the oven of the sky.  
Becoming  
a pair of fish, let us play  
the game of life  
in the warm waters of green ponds

She also transmutes the nocturnal moods of a serene landscape into vibrant little scenes to evoke the apocalypse of nuclear disaster :

Out from  
blue ocean's bed, from the blankets  
of emerald green forests  
from the seething stretch of endless deserts  
rises  
■ bitter storm of black rain.  
In what direction, love,  
is this black bulk of poison heading ?  
You know that man  
hobbling down the valley

with an ocean  
of black clouds clutched under his armpit ?  
Is he going  
to blight emerald pastures  
of our damp dreams ?

Banira always dapples the sheets of natural visions with  
bloodstains of human agony :

Pregnant  
with the wails of a hundred huts  
the hillranges  
beyond the brook are aflame.  
Can't the smell  
of a burnt human hair be a reality ?

Similarly, she yokes the natural upheavals with tumults  
of human heart :

In the blue spaces  
of your luminous skies  
storms whine  
to unhinge the joints of soft hillside huts  
and castles huge  
lit by the luxuriant lights of chandeliers  
erupt volcanoes  
of wrath in the hearts of lantern-lit huts.

Since Banira persistently digs life out from natural  
sources, even nature acquires the role of an awakened avenger  
in the drama of exploitation of man by man, of blue hillranges  
by the "cities of scorpions" where "human beings/stupified by  
the festering stench/of rotting pigs/drool over/running wounds":

Chasing  
the monstrous trucks  
loaded  
with the babes of our labour  
would  
our brooks die ?

• • •

In the streets  
of your cities ugly chaos crawls.  
You have  
to be a singing tree.  
You have  
to be a golden stream.  
Otherwise,  
tearing the flimsy curtains  
of your soft-eyes perceptions,  
a conch of war would cry.

The plot of Banira's creative imagination rolls with the changes in her heroine's role. The wavering roles of the persona, from a young girl whose sack of sari is impregnated with a pile of tulips to a working woman asking her partner to "sprinkle sparks/of sweat over ploughed fields", from a paramour whose figure is warmed by simmering volcanoes of her imaginary lover's broad chest to a rustic labour collecting "memoirs of burst sandgrains", from a young wife "afloat in the foamy atmosphere of jay-bird dreams" to a pregnant mother ready to donate her embryo to the rider of change, from a beloved caught in the frenzy of lovestorm to a mother lying in the ringing spaces of ecstasy with a new born-sun poised between her thighs, reveal the essential ingredients of Banira's vision.

To read a Banira poem, thus, is to play the constantly changing roles of the dying porters, labouring rustics, young sun-worshipping virgins, starving peasants, mothers pregnant with hope, paramours of bare fields in a suffering valley, and with dignity.

Winter '86

Nawab ka Choraha,  
Jaipur

Yuyutsu R. D.





# **DARK HILLPATHS**



**I**

Sweet dreams  
drowse the sunny days of my youth.

In the rising sun's  
service I pour a jug of brookwater  
and white elephants come,  
flying through flashing waterfalls,  
into the blue skies of my consciousness.

A pile of tulips  
pregnates the sack of my *sari*,

What is it  
that I would discover,

tearing  
the fogged screens of your mystery ?

Some city huge,  
clamouring in agony ?

Some battlefields  
of raging Kurukushetra ?

Some sullen  
ghats of cremation ?

some ulcers  
of smoky shacks crying ?

\*

\*

\*

\*

Your streets  
might be lined with

shops  
of imported goods

shacks  
of dying porters

processions  
of enraged fists

funerals  
of decaying dreams.

Your streets  
might just not be bowed over

marble  
steps of dazzling temples

in supplication.

On the thresholds  
of stale brothels

they might  
shatter their headpieces

in desperation.

**3**

My figure  
glazed by your sparkling waterfalls

mellowed  
by your drowsy ponds

I am warming before  
the simmering volcanoes of your broad chest.

My face  
wet and blinking has to flame

like a fiery torch  
to illuminate the intricacies  
of dark hillpaths.

## 4

In the flooded  
paddy fields fogged  
with folksong fluids  
entangled into eachother,  
green tassels, pairs  
of rhododendron,  
of marigold shower  
kisses, exchange lives.  
Lunatics from  
the neighbouring hillranges  
gamble on gurgling  
brook's velvet banks  
beside a *Rodi* house  
wherein young lovers  
meet to consume  
the night's flaming candle.



**5**

Out from  
blue ocean's bed, from the blankets  
of emerald green forests,  
from the seething stretch of endless deserts  
rises  
a bitter storm of black rain.

In what direction, love,  
is this black bulk of poison heading ?

You know that man  
hobbling down the valley  
with an ocean  
of black clouds clutched under his armpit ?

Is he going  
to blight the emerald pastures  
of our damp dreams ?

## 6

On each watery eye  
of a peacock's iridescent feather  
chanting notes  
of summer ecstasy,  
on each petal  
of rhododendron furling ecstatic  
in the straw baskets  
of rustic girls in love,  
I would write  
plump letters of love.  
Completely crazed,  
caught in a frenzy of a tempest  
I fling these letters  
of love for you,  
this post  
of storm  
and lightning.

## 7

Imagine  
a scene fragrant, furred by windwings.

Imagine  
a sky fogged by smoke sheets.

Imagine  
a settlement gnawed by the landlords of hunger.

Imagine  
some fragment of a rainbow.

Imagine  
the effort of a green yak shawl  
trying to wrap  
and warm the body of a hillgirl.

Can't your  
imagination be as fragrant  
as odour  
of mutton boiling in a hillside hut?

\* \* \* \*

Let us play  
holi in the blood-spilling rise of the angry sun.

Let us guard  
the rise of the full moon.

Let us shatter  
the castle of the stars.

Let us make  
wine in the turbulent pitcher of the ocean.

Let us roast  
bread in the oven of the sky.

Becoming  
a pair of fish, let us play  
the game of life  
in the warm waters of green ponds.

Fragment,  
having discovered you,  
I long  
for nothing beyond, nothing.

You  
and you alone  
furl yourself  
before the screen of my eyes.

Like a page  
from my book of poems,  
like a foamy  
shred of monsoon,  
from beginning  
to end, from here to there,

stretch  
the lace of your horizon.

Becoming  
a pair of sturdy footsteps,

start  
a life-commotion.

Be  
a mountain of strength.

Clutch

■ fist of energy.

Get printed

like letters of a book.

The tent  
of our relationships stuck  
in a luminous gypsy atmosphere  
I am tightening. I stretch  
the ropes, I thrust the nails  
deep into the wet earth.  
If once I loosen  
you would roll down  
like a hillside porter  
into the deep of the green valley.  
If once you get uprooted  
I am not going to tighten it again.

From the high plateau  
of our relationship, once you roll down  
(what to talk of identity then)  
even your impressions  
can enter the halls of my mind  
as limping lepers only.

How long would  
you keep coming forward, limping ?

Across the gurgling brook  
from the other end, sitting  
on a slippery rock  
I would watch the web  
of your rickety motion,  
counting the ugly stalks  
of your grotesque frame.

## 10

In your prison cities  
dragging the wagons drugged

by exhaustion  
a million lives have survived

vomiting  
blood brighter than your vicious sunsets.

Wouldn't you let them stretch  
the tarpaulin of your tents in your colonies?

Their pus-dripping eyes  
pierced by seething sandgrains burn fierce.

Wouldn't you let them  
wash the dirt of their bodies

at the banks of your brooks ?



## 11

Don't you bare  
the blood drenched sword of yours.

Don't you scrutinize the furl  
of a rainbow smiling over golden terraces.

Don't you ask me to pour  
a rain of nectar in the city of scorpions.

It's time, love,  
to sing songs of fusion

as time ripens  
for the seeds to burst breasts,

time to sprinkle  
the sparks of sweat over ploughed fields,

time to clean  
the vicious webs of missile-makers.

Don't you see how  
they are rolling on the ground

tickled  
by your issues of faith ?

12

Sources  
of life, love,  
are more fierce  
than the seething rays  
of Jaisalmer sunstrokes.

**13**

Let us collect  
the memoirs of burst sandgrains

as our sturdy legs  
*strain beyond strength*

to carry  
bear-big sackloads

beyond frozen hillranges  
to the local grain markets

where sharp-eyed  
sleek vultures wait

in neat, whitewashed shops  
for the city-trucks to come.

Dying flesh's  
desperate drama....

Chasing  
the monstrous trucks

loaded  
with the babes of our labour

would  
our brooks die ?

Buried beneath  
the festering load

of hunger  
let us go back, crossing

the turbulent brooks,  
to chant mantras

of the swollen  
footsteps thumping

the squelching hillpaths.

**14**

What deafening uproar  
shakes the tattered curtains of our shack ?

Is it from your cities  
where human beings stupified

by the festering stench  
of rotting pigs

drool over  
running wounds ?

And what is that  
that glares behind the gleaming glassed counters?

Isn't it the ugly face  
of a bat turned upside down

in the flooded symphony  
of neon lights ? crying

**CASH DOWN !**  
**CREDIT POISONS !**

## JUNGLE FIRE



## 15

The sweaty smell  
of our bodies thrust us deep  
into the pond of stupor.  
Your each new stroke  
answered  
the awed questions of the thunder stricken night.

And I was afloat  
in the foamy atmosphere of jay-bird dreams.

Our velvet quilt  
like the night's translucent wing covered us  
as we lay upon each other,  
concentrated, gazing  
like the fond shadows  
of Mashapushre hilltops shimmering  
in the watery eyes of Lake Fewa.

Deep  
in the slippery tunnel of the night



your each stroke  
kept shaking illusions, adding  
magnificance to the landscape  
below the drowsy hillocks.

Deep  
in the cool well of the night

I filled  
the valley of my palms with moonlight

and  
massaged your tender limbs.

In the streets  
of your cities ugly chaos crawls.

You have  
to be a singing tree.

You have  
to be a golden stream.

Otherwise,  
tearing the flimsy curtains  
of your soft-eyes perceptions,  
a conch of war would cry.

**17**

You have to be  
■ yagya ■ of peace and prosperity,  
■ narrator  
of tumultuous revolutions.

Your sweat showers  
will shape the lines of your fate.

On your bright forehead  
will I write the headlines of history.

From your shoulders  
will the moons and suns of future rise.

**18**

Pregnant  
with the wails of a hundred huts  
the hillranges  
beyond the brook are aflame.

Can't the smell  
of a burnt human hair be a reality ?

**19**

Drunken feet  
dance to the rhythm of maize grains

bursting  
in the seething cauldrons.

In the light  
of the crackling hearth

grandma's tale  
makes kids clutch

their fingers  
between their jewel-teeth.

In the eye  
of greenery the night consumes

pitchers of local wine,  
softening fogged hilltops.

The singing virgins  
accept the rhetoric of the sturdy youth.

Wouldn't you  
call it bliss, prosperity ?

## 20

From the fancy windows  
of huge castles mighty giants leer  
at your clownish moves  
of survival in the flooded paddy fields.

When would you fling  
a ball of cotton up to the weeping winds ?

When would you furl a flaming torch  
in your field's wailing sky ?

When would you  
flash *khukri*

in the dark night  
of your labouring life to tear off

the leprosy mask  
of these gaints peering through

the blind  
shutters of skyscrapers.

**21**

In the blue spaces  
of your luminous skies  
storms whine  
to unhinge the joints of soft hillside huts  
and castles huge  
lit by the luxuriant lights of chandeliers  
erupt volcanoes  
of wrath in the hearts of lantern-lit huts.

## 22

In this part of the world, love,  
human beings have risen  
to clutch sparks of life,  
to shake the tongues of huge brass bells  
hanging in your damp squares,  
to challenge  
the order of your yearly moves.  
Just to glimpse  
the hissing brooks of motion  
have human beings  
burnt their promiscuous dreams  
with the flames  
of being born on this earth,  
branded  
the moons of their babe's rosy palms,  
bursting  
the soft balloons of their wives' breasts.



Just for a spark of life.

\*       \*       \*       \*

Wouldn't you come then to see  
how I too have torn the tent of my skin apart.

The golden dust  
from the shrine of your footprints

I would pick up.

Besmearing  
my body with your golden dust

I would become  
your eternal bride.

A heifer  
about to be hacked

to bless  
a congress of corpses,

that's what I am.

Won't you accept me ?

## 23

Like a dazzling prince  
riding a white horse, flashing

a flame of decision,  
wouldn't you come then ?

Dreamy virgins  
holding pitchers of faith would welcome you.

Pregnant mothers  
would donate their embryos to you.

Dusty hutdwellers  
would open their tiny wooden windows

facing  
the green stretch of the paddy.

Even tiny tassels  
would nod, beginning a dance.

## 24

Rider,  
wouldn't you come to burst

the pond  
of blood thickened in my chilled fissure.

If only you could  
smash its glossy surface

flanked  
by the goddesses of poverty and prosperity

I would appear  
on the gateway to serve you  
with the pitcher of my body.

Would you call  
it a futile wish ?

Isn't it  
loyalty to life

fuelled  
by the fires of life ?

Concentrating thus,  
reaching a liquid point of your manhood,  
let us not try

to conceive a point of history

in the form of a colourful stream.

(History though *is* a colourful stream)

Let not

the seething sources of longing

suck the necklace  
of this colourful stream flung

into the vast stretch,  
of our mind's desert.

Let it crawl endlessly,  
Sagarmatha, Khaiber,

Kakeshwar, Suej, Panama.

History never believes in suicide.

Its boundaries  
are its own, and in its glass houses  
it treasures  
the corpses of murders and suicides.

History never commits suicide.  
It always conjures a trial box in itself for us all.

## 26

Comfort  
of melting, romance of meeting,  
lust of getting sloshed out,  
passion of getting knocked down  
the bliss of fusing  
like brooks intermittently.

Perhaps  
Himal knows all.

Glacial solidarity  
before melting,  
quietitude  
after upsurge of ecstasy,  
clear comedowns,  
after ardent climbs, inertia  
after motion, silence  
after frivolity.

Perhaps  
Himal, a penitent, a lunatic knows all.

## 27

Let your figure  
be a shrine of sturdy porters.

Let your each sense  
be a well for parched throats

Let your each limb  
be a relic for figures

demented  
by the fields' callous moves.

In your broad chest  
I would stick an almond tree.

Let it flourish  
and breathe fragrant.

## 28

Relieved  
after the labour of giving you birth,

I lie, whirling  
in the ringing spaces of ecstasy.

Won't you  
pour in profusion, sweet sky,

to coronate  
the birth of this newborn sun ?

Is this moment  
going to remain uncelebrated, mundane ?

Like an alert infantry  
behind the dark hills millions of sunrays

are waiting  
to climb over to view this end.



**29**

Nurse, where are you ? where ?

Crying anarchic  
stained with my fresh blood

the just born sun  
lies between my sticky thighs.

Would no nurse  
glaze your body bright ?

Has she  
gone to the toilet ?

Or is it  
to your supermarkets that she has gone ?

Would I die  
with the placenta poisoning fast in my womb ?

And your umbilical cord ?

Sweet my sun,  
are you going to be orphaned, derelict ?

## 30

Sweet son,  
you could be a Hamlet,  
a dangling  
diadem of dying and being  
of cause  
and confusion,  
could be  
a sword of decision,  
could sharpen your  
new blade on the rocks of my body,  
could dip its emblazoned point  
in a bowl of potassium cyanide  
to pierce my soft  
throat with its poisoned end.  
Squirming  
in the point of poison  
I would love to die  
for secretly  
I have been rearing  
an illicit affair with my age,  
an illicit affair with my age.

**31**

Man's child sleeps  
in the cradle I rock.

My lap's warmth  
glows the colour of his dreams.

On the day  
of his birth, won't you  
give him  
your strong shoulder ?

Aren't you going  
to present him a galloping white horse ?

In the glow  
of moonlight, won't you dazzle  
his life's flame ?

Son of a man he is,  
what more would you want ?

Let him  
climb your shoulders.

Let him rise  
to view the worries of the world.

Make him  
a mighty rider.

Play  
pipes of welcome.

His beginning  
of this journey is promise of our life.

## 31

Man's child sleeps  
in the cradle I rock.

My lap's warmth  
glows the colour of his .

On the day  
of his birth, won't you  
give him  
your strong shoulder

Aren't you going  
to present him a gall

In the glow  
of moonlight, won't  
his life's flame ?

Son of a man he is,  
what more would yo

Let him  
climb your shoulder

## In The Halls Of Hell

130 R. D. & Ramanand Rathi

to us', point out the editors, describing David Ray's honest poems about India, 'as lived by some genuine Indian.' The nightmarish images of stark poverty to lies of our starving nation.

has this to say of David Ray's poems  
of the poet's outrage over the  
amely wealthy toward the abysmally  
In *The Nation* Denise Levertov wrote  
inspired by the Ghazals of Ghalib :  
ic love poems that stand out for  
of poems I've read this year."  
downtrodden comes alive in every

*The Hindustan Times*

R. D. as an important voice in the  
poetry. The poems are those  
R. D. ardently lived and exuberant.

ic, he is rocking and rolling with

ns touch with their sheer honesty.'

and a good ear :

*in the jungle  
ped its chirr.*

n silence is unique.

*Hindustan Times*

poet with a fine sense of place

PUBLICATIONS

New Delhi

## BOOKS BY BANIRA GIRI

### POETRY :

**Eauta Eauta**

**Jiudo Jang Bahadur** (Each one a living Jung Bahadur),  
Apurav Prakashan, Kathamandu, 1974

**Jeeven Thayamaru** (Life : no place) Sanjha Prakashan,  
Kathmandu, 1978

**Mero Avishkar** (My discovery) Apurav Prakashan,  
Kathmandu, 1985

**Banira Giri ka**

**Naya Kavita Horu** (New Poems) (Forthcoming) Apurav.  
Prakashan, Kathmandu, 1987

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**Mero Yatra Horu** (Travelogues) (Forthcoming)

# Elysium In The Halls Of Hell

David Ray

*Edited By Yuyutsu R. D. & Ramanand Rathi*

'The poems came to us', point out the editors, describing the inner fire of David Ray's honest poems about India, 'as native beings conceived by some genuine Indian.' The poems evoke the nightmarish images of stark poverty to expose the bleak realities of our starving nation.

*The Kansas City Star* has this to say of David Ray's poems about India : " ..a statement of the poet's outrage over the indifference of the extremely wealthy toward the abysmally poor lower castes ' In *The Nation* Denise Levertov wrote of David Ray's poems inspired by the Ghazals of Ghalib : '...brief, almost epigrammatic love poems that stand out for me among the books of poems I've read this year.'

'The feeling for the downtrodden comes alive in every second page.'

Keki N. Daruwala in *The Hindustan Times*

## A Prayer In Daylight

Yuyutsu R. D.

The book establishes R. D. as an important voice in the world of Indian English poetry. The poems are those experiences of life which R. D. ardently lived and exuberantly wrote.

'Young, versatile, energetic, he is rocking and rolling with new impressions.'

—David Ray

'On first reading the poems touch with their sheer honesty.'

—Jayanta Mahapatra

Yuyutsu has a good eye and a good ear :

*The ruin stopped in the jungle*

*The cicada stopped its chirr.*

To have an ear for a sudden silence is unique.

Keki N. Daruwala in *The Hindustan Times*

'Yuyustu is a very promising poet with a fine sense of place and gift for vivid imagery.'

—Indian Literature



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**Jiudo Jang Bahadur** (Each one a living Jung Bahadur),  
Apurav Prakashan, Kathamandu, 1974

**Jeevan Thayamaru** (Life : no place) Sanjha Prakashan,  
Kathmandu, 1978

**Mero Avishkar** (My discovery) Apurav Prakashan,  
Kathmandu, 1985

**Banira Giri ka**

**Naya Kavita Horu** (New Poems) (Forthcoming) Apurav.  
Prakashan, Kathmandu, 1987

### FICTION

**Karagar** (The Prisonhouse) Sanjha Prakashan, Kath-  
mandu, 1985

**Nirbandh** (Unbound) Sanjha Prakashan, Kathmandu,  
1986

**Mero Yatra Horu** (Travelogues) (Forthcoming)

# Elysium In The Halls Of Hell

David Ray

Edited By Yuyutsu R. D. & Ramanand Rathi

'The poems came to us', point out the editors, describing the inner fire of David Ray's honest poems about India, 'as native beings conceived by some genuine Indian.' The poems evoke the nightmarish images of stark poverty to expose the bleak realities of our starving nation.

*The Kansas City Star* has this to say of David Ray's poems about India : " ..a statement of the poet's outrage over the indifference of the extremely wealthy toward the abysmally poor lower castes " In *The Nation* Denise Levertov wrote of David Ray's poems inspired by the Ghazals of Ghalib : '...brief, almost epigrammatic love poems that stand out for me among the books of poems I've read this year.'

'The feeling for the downtrodden comes alive in every second page.'

Keki N. Daruwala in *The Hindustan Times*

## A Prayer In Daylight

Yuyutsu R. D.

The book establishes R. D. as an important voice in the world of Indian English poetry. The poems are those experiences of life which R. D. ardently lived and exuberantly wrote.

'Young, versatile, energetic, he is rocking and rolling with new impressions.'

—David Ray

'On first reading the poems touch with their sheer honesty.'

—Jayanta Mahapatra

Yuyutsu has a good eye and a good ear :

*The rain stopped in the jungle*

*The cicada stopped its chirr.*

To have an ear for a sudden silence is unique.

Keki N. Daruwala in *The Hindustan Times*

'Yuyustu is a very promising poet with a fine sense of place and gift for vivid imagery.'

—Indian Literature



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## Dispossessed Nests : The 1984 Poems

Jayanta Mahapatra

*Edited by Yuyutsu R. D. & Ramanand Rathi*

The book contains stunning metaphors of contemporary chaos caused by the vultures of the country's corrupt leaders. Mahapatra unleashes the buried horror of long and supreme knives in Punjab and the barbarous dance of bejewelled snakes, of multinational companies in Bhopal. The poems are bitter experiences of the Indian masses betrayed by an inhuman set-up.

"Between waking and sleep, sunlight and rain, love and loss, Jayanata Mahapatra probes his own dark heart for the happiness he fails to find anywhere else."

—Hudson Review

"Mahapatra's passion and insight, his capture of hurt in seeking justification for life through greater perception is indeed, in its own keen way crying 'More light ! More light !' The man is at once tender and unflinching."

—Ronald H. Bayes in *The Pilot*.

"...the touchstone for them (the poems) is always the value of the lives of men, women and children, caught briefly in the world of pain and poverty."

—John Barnie in *Kunapipi*.

'Laconic beginnings lead to abrupt, frightening endings.'

Keki N. Daruwalla in *The Hindustan Times*

"In *Dispossessed Nests* one hears the wails of a world shattered within a human heart."

—Yuyutsu R.D. and Ramanand Rathi (*From the Introduction*)



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## दूज का चाँद

मेरे छोटे घर-कुटीर का दिया  
 तुम्हारे मन्दिर के विस्तृत छाँगन में  
 सहमा-सा रख दिया गया । . .



असाध्य वीणा





## असाध्य बीणा.

धा राये प्रियंवद ! केशकम्बली ! गुफा-गेह !  
 राजा ने आसन दिया । कहा :  
 "कृतकृत्य हुआ मैं तात ! प्यारे आप ।  
 भरोसा है अब मुझ को  
 साध आज मेरे जीवन की पूरी होगी ।"

लघु संकेत समक्ष राजा का  
 गण दौड़े । लाये असाध्य बीणा,  
 साधक के आगे रख उस को, हट गये ।  
 सभा की उत्सुक आँखें  
 एक बार बीणा को लख, टिक गयीं  
 प्रियंवद के चेहरे पर ।

"यह बीणा उत्तराखण्ड के गिरि-प्रान्तर से  
 —घने वनों में जहाँ तपस्या करते हैं व्रतचारी—  
 बहुत समय पहले आयी थी ।  
 पूरा तो इतिहास न जान सके हम :  
 किन्तु सुना है  
 वज्रकीर्ति ने मन्त्रपूत जिस  
 अति प्राचीन किरीटी-तरु से इसे गढ़ा था—  
 उस के कानों में हिम-शिखर रहस्य कहा करते थे अपने,

कन्धों पर बादल सोते थे,  
 उस की करि गुण्डों-सी डालें  
 हिम-वर्षा से पूरे वन-यूथों का कर लेती थीं परित्राण,  
 कोटर में भालू बसते थे, .....  
 केहरि उस के बल्कल से कन्धे खुजलाने आते थे ।  
 और—सुना है—जड़ उस की जा पहुँची थी पाताल-लोक,  
 उस की गन्ध-प्रवण शीतलता से फण टिका नाग वासुकि  
 सोता था ।

उसी किरीटो-तरु से वज्र कीर्ति ने  
 सारा जीवन इसे गढ़ा :  
 हठ-साधना यही थी उस साधक की—  
 वीणा पूरी हुई, साथ साधना, साथ ही जीवन-लीला ।”

राजा रुके, सौंस लम्बी ले कर फिर बोले :  
 “मेरे हार गये सब जाने-माने कलावन्त,  
 सब की विद्या हो गयी अकारण, दर्प चूर,  
 कोई जानी गुणी आज तक इसे न साध सका ।  
 अब यह असाध्य वीणा ही ख्यात हो गयी ।  
 पर मेरा अब भी है विश्वास  
 कृच्छ्र-तप वज्रकीर्ति का व्यर्थ नहीं था ।  
 वीणा बोलेगी अवश्य, पर तभी  
 इसे जब सच्चा-स्वरसिद्ध गोद में लेगा ।  
 तात ! प्रियंवद ! लो, यह सम्मुख रही तुम्हारे  
 वज्रकीर्ति की वीणा,  
 यह मैं, यह रानी, भरी सभा यह :  
 सब उदग्र, पर्युत्सुक,  
 जन-मात्र प्रतीक्षमाण !”

आँगन के पार द्वार

केशकम्बली गुफा-गेह ने खोला कम्बल ।  
 धरती पर चुप-चाप बिछाया ।  
 वीणा उस पर रख, पलक मूँद कर, प्राण खींच,  
 कर के प्रणाम,  
 अस्पर्श छुअन से छुए तार ।  
 धीरे बोला : "राजन् ! पर मैं तो  
 कलाचन्त हूँ नहीं, शिष्य, साधक हूँ—  
 जीवन के अनकटे सत्य का साक्षी ।  
 वज्रकीर्ति !  
 प्राचीन किराँटी-तरु !  
 अभिमन्त्रित वीणा !  
 ध्यान-मात्र इन का तो गद्गद विह्वल कर देने वाला है ।"

चुप हो गया प्रियंवद ।  
 सभा भी मौन हो रही ।

बाघ उठा साधक ने गोद रख लिया ।  
 धीरे-धीरे झुक उस पर, तारों पर मस्तक टेक दिया ।  
 सभा चकित थी—अरे, प्रियंवद क्या सोता है ?  
 केशकम्बली अथवा हो कर परामृत  
 झुक गया बाघ पर ?  
 वीणा सचमुच क्या है असाध्य ?

पर उस स्पन्दित सन्नाटे में  
 मौन प्रियंवद साध रहा था वीणा—  
 नहीं, स्वयं अपने को शोध रहा था ।  
 सघन निविड में वह अपने को

सौंप रहा था उसी किरीटी-तरु को ।  
 कौन प्रियंवद है कि दम्भ कर  
 इस अभिमन्त्रित कारुवाद्य के सम्मुख आवे ?  
 कौन बजावे  
 यह वीणा जो स्वयं एक जीवन-भर की साधना रही ?  
 भूल गया था केशकम्बली राज-सभा को :  
 कम्बल पर अभिमन्त्रित एक अकेलेपन में डूब गया था  
 जिस में साक्षी के आगे था  
 जीवित वही किरीटी-तरु  
 जिस की जड़ वासुकि के फण पर थी आधारित,  
 जिसके कन्धों पर बादल सोते थे  
 और कान में जिस के हिमगिरि कहते थे अपने रहस्य ।  
 सम्बोधित कर उस तरु को, करता था  
 नीरव एकालाप प्रियंवद ।

“ओ विशाल तरु !  
 शत-सहस्र पल्लवन-पतझरों ने जिसका नित रूप सँवारा,  
 कितनी बरसातों कितने खबोतों ने आरती उतारी,  
 दिन भौंरे कर गये गुंजरित,  
 रातों में झिल्ली ने  
 अनथक मंगल-गान सुनाये,  
 साँझ-सवेरे अनगिन  
 अनचीन्हे खग-कुल की मोद-भरी क्रीडा-काकलि  
 डाली-डाली को कँपा गयी—  
 ओ दीर्घकाय !  
 ओ पूरे शारखण्ड के अग्रज,  
 तात, सखा, गुरु, आश्रय,

आँगन के पार

आता महच्छाय,  
 ओ व्याकुल मुखरित वन-ध्वनियों के  
 वृन्दगान के मूर्त्त रूप,  
 मैं तुझे सुनूँ,  
 देखूँ, ध्याऊँ  
 अनिमेष, स्तब्ध, संयत, संयुत, निर्वाक् :  
 कहाँ साहस पाऊँ  
 छू सकूँ तुझे ।  
 तेरी काया को छेद, बाँध कर रची गयी वीणा को  
 किस स्पद्धा से  
 हाथ करें आघात  
 छीनने को तारों से  
 एक चोट में वह संचित संगीत जिसे रचने में  
 स्वयं न जाने कितनों के स्पन्दित प्राण रच गये !

"नहीं, नहीं ! वीणा यह मेरी गोद रखी है, रहे,  
 किन्तु मैं ही तो  
 तेरी गोदी बैठा मोद-भरा बालक हूँ,  
 ओ तरु-तात ! सँभाल मुझे,  
 मेरी हर किलक  
 पुलक में डूब जाय :  
 मैं सुनूँ,  
 सुनूँ,  
 विस्मय से भर आँकूँ  
 तेरे अनुभव का एक-एक अन्तःस्वर  
 तेरे दोलन की लोरी पर झूमूँ मैं तन्मय—  
 गा तू :

तेरी लय पर मेरी साँसें  
भरें, पुरें, रीतें, विश्रान्ति पायें ।

“गा तू !

यह बीणा रखी है : तेरा अंग—ऊपंग !  
किन्तु अंगी, तू अक्षत, आत्म-भरित,  
रस-विद् ,

तू गा :

मेरे अँधियारे अन्तस् में आलोक जगा  
स्मृति का

श्रुति का—

तू गा, तू गा, तू गा, तू गा !

“हाँ, मुझे स्मरण है :

बदली—कौंध—पत्तियों पर वर्षा-बूँदों की पटपट ।

घनी रात में महुए का चुप-चाप टपकना ।

चौंके खग-शावक की चिहूँक ।

शिलाओं को दुलराते वन-झरने के

द्रुत लहरीले जल का कल-निनाद ।

कुहरे में छन कर आती

पर्वती गाँव के उत्सव-ढोलक की थाप ।

गडरिये की अनमनी बाँसुरी ।

कठफोड़े का ठेका । फुलमुँघनी की आतुर फुरकन ।

ओस-बूँद की दरकन—इतनी कोमल, तरल, कि झरते-  
झरते मानों

हरसिंगार का फूल बन गयी ।

भरे शरद के ताल, लहरियों की सरसर-ध्वनि ।

आँगन के पार द्वार

कूँजों का कूँकार । काँद लम्बी टिट्ठि की ।  
 पंख-युक्त सायक-सी हंस-बलाका ।  
 चौड़-वनों में गन्ध-अन्ध उन्मद पतंग की जहाँ-तहाँ टकराहट  
 जल-प्रपात का प्लुत एकस्वर ।  
 झिल्ली-दादुर, कोकिल-चातक की शंकार-पुकारों की यति में  
 संसृति की साँय-साँय ।

“हाँ, मुझे स्मरण है :  
 दूर पहाड़ों से काले मेघों की बाढ़  
 हाथियों का मानो बिँघाड़ रहा हो यूथ ।  
 घरघराहट चढ़ती बहिया की ।  
 रेतीले कगार का गिरना छप्-छड़ाप ।  
 झंझा की फुफकार, तप्त,  
 पेड़ों का अररा कर टूट-टूट कर गिरना ।  
 ओले की करीं चपत ।  
 जमे पाले से तनी कटारी-सी सूखी घासों की टूटन ।  
 ऐंठी मिट्टी का स्निग्ध घाम में धीरे-धीरे रिसना ।  
 हिम-तुपार के फाहे धरती के घावों को सहलाते चुप-चाप ।  
 घाटियाँ में भरती  
 गिरती चट्टानों की गूँज—  
 काँपती मन्द्र गूँज—अनुगूँज—साँस खोयी-सी,  
 धीरे-धीरे नीरव ।

“मुझे स्मरण है  
 हरी तलहटी में, छोटे पेड़ों की ओट, ताल पर  
 बँधे समय वन-पशुओं की नानाविध आतुर-वृत्त पुकारें :  
 गर्जन, घुर्घुर, चीख, भूँक, हुक्का, चिचियाहट ।



कमल-कुमुद-पत्रों पर चोर-पैर द्रुत धावित  
 जल-पंछी की चाप ।  
 थाप दादुर की चकित छल्लों की ।  
 पन्थी के घोड़े की टाप अधीर ।  
 अचंचल धीर थाप मैसों के भारी खुर की ।

“मुझे स्मरण है  
 उसक क्षितिज से  
 किरण मोर की पहली  
 जब तकती है ओस-बूँद को—  
 उस क्षण की सहसा चौकी-सी सिहरन ।  
 और दुपहरी में जब  
 घास-फूल अनदेखे खिल जाते हैं  
 मौमालियाँ असंख्य झूमती करती हैं गुंजार—  
 उस लम्बे विलम्बे क्षण का तन्द्रालस टहराव ।  
 और सौंझ को  
 जब तारों की तरल कँपकँपो  
 स्पर्शहीन झरती है—  
 मानो नभ में तरल-नयन ठिठकी  
 निःसंख्य सवरसा युवती माताओं के आशीर्वाद—  
 उस सन्धि-निमिष की पुलकन लीयमान ।

“मुझे स्मरण है  
 और चित्र प्रत्येक  
 स्तब्ध, विजडित करता है मुझ को ।  
 सुनता हूँ मैं  
 पर हर स्वर-कम्पन लेता है मुझ को मुझ से सोम—

वायु-सा नाद-भरा मैं उड़ जाता हूँ ।...  
 मुझे स्मरण है—  
 पर मुझ को मैं भूल गया हूँ :  
 सुनता हूँ मैं—  
 पर मैं मुझ से परे, शब्द में लीयमान ।

"मैं नहीं, नहीं ! मैं कहीं नहीं !  
 ओ रे तरु ! ओ वन !  
 ओ स्वर-सँभार !  
 नाद-मय संसृति !  
 ओ रस-प्लावन !  
 मुझे क्षमा कर—भूल अकिंचनता को मेरी—  
 मुझे ओट दे—ढँक ले—छा ले—  
 ओ शरण्य !  
 मेरे गूँगेपन को तेरे सोये स्वर-सागर का ज्वार डुबा ले !  
 आ, मुझे भुला,  
 तू उतर धीन के तारों में  
 अपने से गा  
 अपने को गा—  
 अपने स्वर्ग-कुल को मुखरित कर  
 अपनी छाया में पले मृगों की चौंकड़ियों को ताल बाँध,  
 अपने छायातप, वृष्टि-पवन, पल्लव-कुसुमन की लय पर  
 अपने जीवन-संचय को कर छन्दयुक्त,  
 अपनी प्रज्ञा को वाणी दे !  
 तू गा, तू गा—  
 तू सन्निधि पा—तू खो  
 तू आ—तू हो—तू गा ! तू गा !”

राजा जागे ।

समाधिस्थ संगीतकार का हाथ उठा था—

फौपी थी उँगलियाँ ।

अलस अँगड़ाई ले कर मानो जाग उठी थी वोणा :

किलक उठे थे स्वर-जिनु ।

नीरव पद रसता जात्रिक मायावी

सधे फरो से धीरे धीरे धीरे

ढाल रहा था जाल हेम-तारों का ।

सदसा वोणा झनझना उठी—

संगीतकार की आँखों में ठंडी पिपली ज्वाला-सी झलक गयी—

रोमांच एक बिजली-सा सब के तन में दौड़ गया ।

अवतरित हुआ संगीत

स्वयम्भू

जिस में सोता है अक्षण्ड

ब्रह्मा का मौन

अशेष प्रभामय ।

झूब गये सब एक साथ ।

सब अलग-अलग एकाकी पार तिर्रे ।

राजा ने अलग सुना :

जय देवी यशःकाय

चरमाल लिये

गाती थी मंगल-गीत,

दुन्दुभी दूर कहीं बजती थी,

आँगन के पार द्राम

राज-मुकुट सहसा हलका हो आया था, मानो हो फूल  
सिरिस का ।

ईर्ष्या, महदाकांक्षा, द्वेष, चाटुता  
सभी पुराने लुगड़े-से क्षर गये, निस्तर धाया था जीवन-कांचन  
धर्म-भाव से जिसे निछावर वह कर देगा ।

रानी ने अलग सुना :

छँटती बदली में एक कौंध कह गयी—

तुम्हारे ये मणि-माणिक, कंठहार, पट-वस्त्र,  
मेखला-किंकिणि—

सब अन्धकार के कण हैं ये ! आलोक एक है

प्यार अनन्य । उसी की

विद्युल्लता घेरती रहती है रस-भार मेघ को,

थिरक उसी की छाती पर, उस में छिप कर सो जाती है  
आश्वस्त, सहज विश्वास-भरी ।

रानी

उस एक प्यार को साधेगी ।

सब ने भी अलग-अलग संगीत सुना ।

इस को

वह कृपा-वाक्य था प्रभुओं का—

उस को

आतंक-मुक्ति का आश्वासन :

इस को

वह भरी तिजोरी में सोने की खनक—

उसे

बटुली में बहुत दिनों के बाद अन्न की सोंधी खुदबुद ।

किसी एक को नयी वधू की सहमो-सो पायल-ध्वनि ।

किसी दूसरे को शिशु की किलकारी ।

एक किसी को जाल-फँसी मछली की तड़पन—

एक अपर को चहक मुक्त नभ में उड़ती चिड़िया की ।

एक तीसरे को मंडी की टेन्मठेरु, गाहकों की आस्पद्वा-भरी  
बोलियाँ,

चौथे को मन्दिर की ताल-युक्त घंटा-ध्वनि ।

और पाँचवें को लोहे पर सधे हथौड़े की सम चोटें

और छठे को लंगर पर कसमसा रही नौका पर लहरों की  
अविराम थपक ।

बटिया पर चमरौंधे की रूंधी चाप सातवें के लिए—

और आठवें को कुलियाँ की कटो मेंड़ से बहते जल की  
छल-छल ।

इसे गमक नट्टिन की एड़ी के घुँघरूँ की—

उसे युद्ध का ढोल :

इसे संज्ञा-गोधूली की लघु टुन-टुन—

उसे प्रलय का डमरु-नाद ।

इसको जीवन की पहली अँगड़ाई

पर उस को महाजृम्भ विकराल काल ।

सब डूबे, तिरे, क्षिपे, जागे—

हो रहे वशंवद, स्तब्ध :

इयत्ता सब की अलग-अलग जागी,

संघीत हुई,

पा गयी विलय ।

वीणा फिर मूक हो गयी ।

“साधु ! साधु !”

आँगन के पार द्वार

राजा सिंहासन से उतर—  
रानी ने अर्पित की सतलड़ी माल,  
जनता विह्वल कह उठी “धन्य !  
हे स्वरजित् ! धन्य ! धन्य !”

संगीतकार

वीणा को धीरे से नीचे रख, ढँक—मानो  
गोदी में सोये शिशु को पालने डाल कर मुग्धा माँ  
हट जाय, दीठ से दुलराती—  
उठ खड़ा हुआ ।

बढ़ते राजा का हाथ उठा करता आवर्जन,  
बोला :

“श्रेय नहीं कुछ मेरा :

मैं तो डूब गया था स्वयं शून्य में—

वीणा के माध्यम से अपने को मैंने

सब-कुछ को सौंप दिया था—

सुना आपने जो वह मेरा नहीं,

न वीणा का था :

वह तो सब-कुछ की सत्यता थी—

महाशून्य

वह महामौन

अविभाज्य, अनाप्त, अद्रवित, अप्रमेय

जो शब्दहीन

सब में गाता है ।”

नमस्कार कर मुड़ा प्रियंवद केशकम्बली । ले कर कम्बल  
गेह-गुफा को चला गया ।

उठ गयी सभा । सब अपने-अपने काम लगे ।  
युग पलट गया ।

प्रिय पाठक ! यों मेरी वाणी भी  
मौन हुई ।



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